



**JOHN DOE REMEMBERS:
THE REPORTER WHO COVERED GETTYSBURG**
Adapted from the NBC production that aired Sunday, May 25, 1941

CAST:

Narrator	Veteran	Soldier
Reporter	Cole	Woman
Chairman	Lincoln	Stockton
Sam	Curtin	Man
Sparks	Goldsmith	
Burns	Poore	

Notes on Vocabulary:

Benediction: Statement of blessings spoken at the end of a religious service

Dirge: *Music*, poem or song for the dead, often heard at a funeral

Oration: A formal speech

John Doe or Sam Small: Common names used to refer to an anonymous, unknown, person in place of "the unnamed man"

NARRATOR: "JOHN DOE REMEMBERS"

MUSIC: *UP AND DOWN TO PLAY IN BACKGROUND*

ANNOUNCER: The Library of Congress in collaboration with the National Broadcasting Company presents....John Doe Remembers! Each week at this time we tell you a story of America as remembered by the John Does and the Sam Smalls who lived the story. They are taken from the diaries, the documents and personal letters contained in the Library of Congress...Today we tell you the story of the Reporter Who Covered Gettysburg...

SOUND: *TELEGRAPH KEY TO BACKGROUND*

(**Production Note: This sounds like a typewriter to indicate that the reporter is relaying the story to the paper as it is observed**)

REPORTER: "To the New York Times from special correspondent....Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, Thursday evening, November 19, 1863"..



- SOUND:** TELEGRAPH KEY UP FOR THREE SECONDS
THEN DOWN TO BACKGROUND
- REPORTER:** "After another dirge has been sung, a benediction was pronounced and the throng of people dispersed and returned toward the town. The celebration was complete."
- MUSIC:** *UP ON VOICES SINGING*
- VOICES:** 'Tis holy ground ---
This spot, where in their graves,
We place our country's braves,
Who fell in Freedom's holy cause
Fighting for Liberty and Laws
Let tears abound. **(FADE)**
- NARRATOR:** The ceremonies were over. The long unburied dead of Gettysburg had found peace at last. The speeches were made. Edward Everett had spoken and Lincoln had spoken too. That much we know!
- MUSIC:** *UP AND OUT*
- NARRATOR:** There are many legends concerning Lincoln's Gettysburg address. The most popular one is that Lincoln wrote the speech on the scrap of an envelope while traveling to the battlefield. Yet, in a glass case, in the Library of Congress, there are two carefully corrected drafts of the address in Lincoln's own handwriting. Another legend has it that his speech was received with awed silence. Maybe it was. Some say there were cheers. Another story tells of an historical society that called a meeting to determine what really happened at Gettysburg. They invited four men who had been there! Eye-witnesses! The room was hot. The four old men nodded sleepily on the platform. There had been many speeches, - long ones; and they were tired. But now it was their turn...
- SOUND:** *ROOM NOISES...*
- CHAIRMAN:** (CLEARS HIS THROAT) And now...with a feeling of awe we turn to our honored guests. With them we can share the memory of that great day...and live it again as it really happened.
I call on Sam Small...
- SOUND:** *APPLAUSE*
- CHAIRMAN:** (WHISPER) Sam...Sam...get up..wake up..



SAM: (BEWILDERED) Huh...huh..

CHAIRMAN: It's your turn.. Tell them what happened..

SAM: Well, Uncle Abe spoke in a clear, loud voice.
You could hear a pin drop when he spoke those immortal words. There were a hundred thousand in the crowd.
And it rained cats and dogs.

SOUND: *APPLAUSE*

CHAIRMAN: And now I introduce to another eye-witness:
Jedidiah Sparks.

SPARKS: You couldn't hardly hear a word he said so low did he speak.
But when he finished there was cheer after cheer
sweeping over that sea of upturned faces. Must have
been ten, fifteen thousand people there.
And it was November, but the sun burned down (FADE)
hot as July...

BURNS: (FADING IN) And I remember...that Lincoln was
disappointed in his speech and everybody said it was a
failure...I ought to know...I was there.

CHAIRMAN: And now let us hear from another who was there as
well....

VETERAN: Why, when Lincoln rose to speak it seemed like he'd
never finish standing up – so tall he was. He was the
tallest, awkwardest looking man I ever saw.
I think he had a slip of paper, the size of a visiting card in
his hand. I thought then, and still think it was the shortest,
grandest speech I ever heard.

SOUND: *APPLAUSE*

MUSIC: *Up And Out after first line to follow*



- NARRATOR:** Four eye-witnesses, four different stories. These stories throw light, not on the event, perhaps, but surely on the people who tell them. Theirs is the story as they felt it and as they lived it; recollections of four anonymous old men, tales snatched from the fringe of memory. We have however, recorded stories of men who were prominent at the time. Here is the story of Senator Cornelius Cole, a member of the Thirty-seventh Congress...
- COLE:** "It has been stated that Mr. Lincoln prepared his speech in writing. There is no foundation for a statement of that kind. Mr. Lincoln probably made not a word nor a note in preparation for that address. It was entirely extemporaneous. When he finished he took his seat very suddenly. It was such a disappointment to everybody that there was no applause of any kind."
- MUSIC:** *QUICK BRIDGE*
- NARRATOR:** And now Governor Andrew G. Curtin, Governor and Statesman of Pennsylvania.
- CURTIN:** "I saw Mr. Lincoln the night before. It was at Mr. Wills' house in Gettysburg."
- SOUND:** *ROOM NOISES...*
- CURTIN:** Will you speak tomorrow, Mr. President?
- LINCOLN:** Yes - - I understand the Committee expects me to say a few words. I've been making some notes on this envelope. With your permission I would like to read them for your criticism.
- MUSIC:** *UP BRIEFLY*
- CURTIN:** Later he returned to his room to recopy his speech on a clean sheet of paper. It was from this paper that he read the address.
- MUSIC:** *UP BRIEFLY*
- LINCOLN:** ...and that this government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth...
- SOUND:** *Tumultuous Applause*



CURTIN: (OVER APPLAUSE) He pronounced that speech in a voice that all the multitude heard. The crowd was hushed into silence because the President stood before them. But at intervals there were roars of applause. My God! It was so impressive!

MUSIC: *BRIEF BRIDGE*

NARRATOR: November 13, 1913, just fifty years after the event, Captain Oliver Goldsmith, who guarded Lincoln from Baltimore to Gettysburg, said...

GOLDSMITH: (SPEAKING IN A LARGE HALL) I have been asked whether there was any applause at the ceremony. There was not. It was a solemn occasion. As he resumed his seat, not a sound could be heard. It seemed as if the throng held its breath for many seconds.

PAUSE: THREE SECONDS

NARRATOR: Said Ben Perley Poore, in his book "Reminiscences of Lincoln",...

POORE: "The Gettysburg Address was written in the car on the way from Washington to the battlefield up on a piece of pasteboard held on his knee."

NARRATOR: Maybe it was....or maybe, the President was just doodling. The anonymous have spoken and the great men have spoken. Each told the story, not of Gettysburg, but of himself at Gettysburg, of himself and Lincoln. But somebody in that crowd was being paid to tell the story for the story's sake.

SOUND: *TELEGRAPH KEY TO BACKGROUND through the Reporter's Following Lines*

REPORTER: To the New York Times, from special correspondent Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, Thursday evening, November 19, 1863. "The ceremonies attending the dedication of the National Cemetery commenced this morning by a grand military and civic display."

SOUND: *TELEGRAPH KEY OUT*

MUSIC: *MILITARY MARCH OF Period TO BACKGROUND*

SOUND: *CROWD NOISES*

SOLDIER: Stand back, please...stand back.



WOMAN: Are you an official?

SOLDIER: Will you please step back, madam?

WOMAN: Pardon, young man, are you in charge here?
SOLDIER: Well..uh..yes'm.

WOMAN: You must help me.

SOLDIER: Yes'm.

WOMAN: I have no lodgings. I must find a place to sleep tonight.
My lands! So many people!

SOLDIER: Yes'm...But I'm -
(SHOUTING, ASIDE) Please stop back there!

WOMAN: Young man..

SOLDIER: But I can't help you, madam.
I'm from a New York regiment.
I don't know where you can stay here.

WOMAN: Couldn't you ask your captain?

SOLDIER: Madam, there are more than fifteen thousand people here. You'll
have to excuse me, madam.
(CALLS OUT) Back please...stand back.

WOMAN: Oh just a moment, please. Fifteen thousand people!
Where will I sleep tonight. I'm so tired. I've been wandering over the
battlefield searching the headboards for the names of my neighbors'
boys. My own boy was lost before Gettysburg...So many headboards
and I'm so tired..

SOLDIER: Yes ma'am...but I'm on duty here. I must -
Look! The President...!

SOUND: *A HUSH.*
A SLOW GALLOP OF A HORSE.
THEN A SOARING CHEER TO BACKGROUND.

WOMAN: Mercy. I never saw such a big man on such a little horse.

SOUND: *TELEGRAPH KEY TO BACKGROUND*



REPORTER: To the NY Times, continued, "After the performance of a funeral dirge by the band, an eloquent prayer was delivered by Reverend Mr. Stockton, as follows:"

STOCKTON: "Our God, our Father, for the sake of the Son, our Savior, inspire us with Thy spirit and sanctify us to the right fulfillment of the duties of this occasion (FADE) We come to dedicate this new historic center as a National Cemetery"

SOUND: *TELEGRAPH KEY TO BACKGROUND*

REPORTER: "Mr. Everett, orator of the day, then commenced the delivery of his oration, which was listened to with marked attention throughout. Parentheses. The oration of Mr. Everett will be found on our second page."

SOUND: *TELEGRAPH KEY Up and Then to Background*

REPORTER: "All the hotels as well as the private houses were filled to overflowing last night. Every housekeeper in Gettysburg has opened a temporary hotel and extends unbounded hospitality to strangers- -"

SOUND: *KNOCK ON DOOR. DOOR OPENS*

MAN: (TOO CONGENIAL) Yes, Madam?

WOMAN: I was told I could find a lodging for the night here. I'm so tired. I've been wandering over the battlefield searching the headboards.

MAN: Oh please, madam, come in.

SOUND: *DOOR CLOSING*

MAN: (VERY EFFUSIVE) Please let me take your coat .. Sit Down...here. We are indeed happy to have you. Dinner will be served at six. The finest room in the house will be placed at your disposal.

WOMAN: Oh thank you. Thank you. You are very kind.

MAN: Uh...uh. That will be four dollars, madam.

WOMAN: (A GASP) Four dollars????

SOUND: *TELEGRAPH KEY TO BACKGROUND*



- REPORTER:** "...and extends unbounded hospitality to strangers...for a consideration."
- MUSIC:** *BRIEF BRIDGE*
- REPORTER:** "Now – back to the battlefield. The present appearance of the cemetery is not very inviting. In wandering around these battlefields one is astonished and indignant to find at almost every step of his progress the carcasses of dead horses, which have been permitted to remain above the ground since the battle and which still breed pestilence in the atmosphere of this whole region. In the house in which I was compelled to seek lodging there are now two boys sick with typhoid fever attributed to this cause."
- NARRATOR:** Yes, Gettysburg was a battlefield. It was not pretty. We've seen the burial ground, the crowded town, the military band, the soldiers on parade, the weary traveler. The stage is set.
- SOUND:** *TELEGRAPH KEY TO BACKGROUND.*
- REPORTER:** "The President then delivered the following dedicatory address:"
- LINCOLN:** Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.
- SOUND:** *APPLAUSE*
- REPORTER:** There was applause at this point. And then the President continued:
- REPORTER:** "Today at Gettysburg a heavy fog clouded the heavens in the morning. During the procession, the sun broke out in all its brilliancy and shone upon the magnificent spectacle."
- LINCOLN:** (TO BACKGROUND) "Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We are met to dedicate a portion of it as the final resting place of those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that



REPORTER: (cont'd) "President Lincoln's address was delivered in a clear, loud tone of voice which could be distinctly heard at the extreme limits of the large assemblage. It was delivered (or rather read from a sheet of paper which the speaker held in his hand) in a very deliberate manner with strong emphasis and with a most business-like air."

SOUND: *APPLAUSE*

REPORTER: The audience again applauded. They seem to have considered with President Lincoln that it was not what was said here but what was done Here that deserved their attention. Four times the audience interrupted with applause

LINCOLN: (cont'd) We should do this. But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate' we cannot consecrate; we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it far above our power to add or detract.

LINCOLN: The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.

SOUND: *APPLAUSE*

It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work that they have thus far nobly carried on.

SOUND: *APPLAUSE*

MUSIC: *Brief Bridge*

LINCOLN: (CONCLUDING) "That the nation shall under God have a new birth of freedom and that Governments of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

SOUND: *GREAT APPLAUSE. THREE DISTINCT CHEERS*

REPORTERS: (OVER APPLAUSE AND CHEERS) "There was long-continued applause. Three cheers were given for the President and the Governors of the States.

MUSIC: *SNEAK CHORUS OF VOICES SINGING DIRGE*

REPORTER: "After the delivery of the addresses the dirge and the benediction closed the exercises...and the immense assemblage separated at about four o'clock."

MUSIC: *Brief Bridge*



NARRATOR: That is the story in the New York Times and it is alike in the New York Tribune, the Philadelphia Inquirer and the Chicago Tribune. Some of the eye-witnesses disagree with the newspapers. Newspapers say there were cheers - - eye-witnesses say there was reverential silence. Newspapers say the sun shone - - eye-witnesses, that it rained that day. But on this point whether the speech was impromptu or prepared, let Lincoln himself throw some light. That evening, after the President had eaten his supper, a crowd gathered before the house where Lincoln was staying...

MUSIC: *UP AND FADE...*

SOUND: *CROWD Noises ...*

VOICES: (SHOUTS) We want Uncle Abe..
Speech!
We want Father Abraham!

SOUND: *SUDDENLY THE VOICES ARE UNITED IN A LOUD CHEER*

NARRATOR: Lincoln appeared on the balcony.

SOUND: *CHEERS OUT. SILENCE.*

LINCOLN: I appear before you, fellow citizens, merely to thank you for this compliment. The inference is a very fair one that you would hear me for a little while at least, were I to commence to make a speech. I do not appear before you for the purpose of doing so, and for several substantial reasons. The most substantial of these is that I have no speech to make.

SOUND: *CROWD LAUGHS*

LINCOLN: In my position it is somewhat important that I should not say any foolish things.

MUSIC: *Up to Tag*

(Production Note :Short Musical piece with a distinct ending, not fading out**)**

NARRATOR: This is the story of Gettysburg, fact and fable. What the people felt and what the people remember, that too is history. History is found not only in books and manuscripts in public libraries but in the minds and the memories of the people, in attics and trunks hidden away and belonging to the people.

MUSIC: *FADE OUT*